

**CITY OF RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN
COMMON COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS**

June 9, 2009

Mayor Richards called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers located in City Hall.

City Council Members Present: Tom Caflisch, Dave Cronk, Bob Ebert, Randy Kusilek, Joleen Larson, Jim Nordgren and David Reese

Staff Present: Bill Thiel, City Attorney; Scot Simpson, City Administrator; Reid Wronski, City Engineer; Julie Bergstrom, Finance Director; Bob Schwalen, Fire Chief; Carl Gaulke, Utility Manager; Buddy Lucero, Community Development Director

Others Present: DeWayne Meyer

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

May 26, 2009, Regular Meeting Minutes

MSC Cronk/Nordgren to approve minutes as submitted. Unanimous.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

City – \$334,258.77

Utility - \$479,709.74

MSC Kusilek/Cronk approve the bills subject to comptroller. Unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENT, PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Recognition of Gwen Paulson for Service on the River Falls Housing Authority

The Mayor recognized Paulson's service on the Housing Authority but Paulson was not present to accept her plaque.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Resolution No. 5274 - Awarding Bid for 2009 Sidewalk, Curb and Gutter Repair Program

Resolution No. 5275 - Approving Release of Easement – Martinsen Investment and Land Company, Inc.

Resolution No. 5276 - Approving 2009 Fee Schedule-Parking Fines

Resolution No. 5277 - Awarding Bid for South Wasson Lane Trail Project

Resolution Approving Updated Hiring Policy →→***Pulled by Ebert***

Resolution No. 5278 - Approving Alteration of Clark Street

Resolution Regarding River Falls Wildcat Soccer Agreement →→***Pulled by Kusilek***

MSC Cronk/Nordgren to approve remainder of Consent Agenda. Unanimous.

Resolution No. 5279 - Approving Updated Hiring Policy

Ebert preferred to keep the policy as it is. He wanted to Council to have a final check on any permanent full-time position hires.

Reese felt comfortable enough with Simpson making the decisions but wanted a list of hires provided to Council monthly.

Caflisch felt it was a pertinent change in the hiring policy and felt that Simpson should be doing the hiring.

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Cronk felt Simpson was the professional and that Council is lay people. While he appreciated other thoughts, he agreed with Caflisch.

Larson noted this was a temporary change in the hiring policy and said hiring of City staff is one of the main jobs of a City Administrator. She was very confident in Simpson taking on this role.

MS Larson/Cronk move to approve resolution. Resolution passed 6-1 with Ebert voting against.

Resolution No. 5280 - Regarding River Falls Wildcat Soccer Agreement

Kusilek asked about water restrictions and who would be supplying bathroom facilities.

Lucero said the sponsors of tournaments would provide restrooms.

Ebert asked about the "under maintenance" wording in the contract. Lucero said he believed that referred to if the field needed repair. He said the soccer association is working with the City on it.

Ebert asked about the soccer association providing the City with a list of events. Lucero said the association would provide the City with a list of events each year.

MSC Ebert/Larson move to approve resolution. Unanimous.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

Ordinance 2009-6 - Amending §9.20.020 of the City Code; Airguns and Slingshots – First Reading

No comment.

Resolution No. 5281 To Authorize the Sale of G.T.R. Partners, LLC Real Estate in Whitetail Ridge Industrial Park to NT RGI Subject to NT RGI Agreement to be Bound by October 5, 2001,

Development Agreement

MSC Caflisch/Nordgren move to approve resolution. Unanimous.

Resolution No. 5282 To Waive Payment Under Development Agreement Between G.T.R. Partners, LLC and City of River Falls

MSC Nordgren/Cronk move to approve resolution. Unanimous.

OLD BUSINESS:

Discussion of Fire Chief Resignation

Simpson noted a memo in the Council packet outlining the present situation. He suggested the Council had two main options: 1) approve the job description as presented and proceed immediately with recruitment or 2) engage in a focused analysis and discussions leading to decision by the City Council later in 2009. He said staff, the Fire Department and the Police and Fire Commission was looking for direction.

Nordgren felt Simpson laid out a good plan with Option 2 for a June 1, 2010, hire.

The Mayor asked about possible interim Fire Chiefs.

Kusilek liked Option 2 also. He felt this was an important decision for the City.

Ebert agreed but asked if the process could be speeded up.

Cafilisch recommended that if Option 2 was chosen, perhaps someone from the Fire Department could serve as interim Fire Chief until the new Chief was hired.

Cronk felt there was a strong need to get someone hired as soon as possible. He commended Bob Schwalen on the job he did as Chief. He also wondered if the process could be speeded up a little bit.

Simpson felt it was a realistic timeframe given the complexity of the issue. He said there were some HR and also funding issues to deal with before the hire. He noted that the Council has not approved a fire inspection fee and that is supposed to be a primary source of funding for this position. He said the Council will not only have to decide on possibly hiring this position but also how to fund it. He said the process could possibly go faster if the Council wanted to fund this position with a 100 percent tax levy but he wasn't sure that was how the Council wanted to proceed. He was cautious to give any belief that the hiring process could move any faster than this timeframe.

Larson noted the funding for the position was a significant consideration. The Council needs to have a plan. She said this is the only time the Council has input into to this process. Afterwards, it is handed over to the Police and Fire Commission.

Simpson said that City Administration and Council would be involved in the tentative process until November after which time the Police and Fire Commission would take it over. Simpson felt at minimum a regional search would be done but more than likely a national search.

The Mayor invited any members of the Police and Fire Commission to speak.

DeWayne Meyer, Chair of Police and Fire Commission, said he has not heard the Council accept Bob Schwalen's resignation. He said that Schwalen has gone over and above the scope of his position. He said he was not aware of any current firefighters who were interested in the position. He said the City has procrastinated long enough and this issue needs to get resolved.

Nordgren recognized Bob Schwalen for his efforts.

Simpson discussed bringing the current Fire Department by-laws into congruence with State Statutes.

Attorney Thiel noted that when the resignation is accepted by the Police and Fire Commission, it is official.

REPORTS:

Administrator's Report

Simpson offered to answer any questions. He noted a concern about a flag on Main Street that he missed.

Cafilisch commented about single-family permits. Simpson cautioned not to make big conclusions from the numbers. He noted a lot more starter homes were being built. He said that people were still selecting River Falls as a place to build new construction, and he thought that was good.

CLOSED SESSION:

MSC Cafilisch/Larson move to recess into Closed Session, per Wisconsin Statutes:

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19.85(1)(c), Wis. Stats., for the purpose of considering employment of a public employee over which the Common Council has jurisdiction; to-wit: Fire Chief

Roll call vote to go into Closed Session was unanimous.

MSC Caflich/Larson move to reconvene into Open Session. Unanimous.

Larson moved to adjourn the meeting. The Mayor adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi McKahan
Deputy City Clerk